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NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

New Exhibitions:

- The Landscape of Latino Los Angeles
- Bears: Imagination & Reality

EL NUEVO MUNDO
The Landscape of Latino Los Angeles

Article and photographs by Camilo José Vergara

IT WAS IN 1992, WHILE TRAVELING EAST along boulevards such as Whittier, Washington, and Florence, and north-south along Central Avenue, that I first became acquainted with *El Nuevo Mundo* of Latino Los Angeles. This "new world" is the hot, flat, and poor part of Los Angeles County, where junkyards and abandoned factories are located, where dogs bark in the alleys.

I documented what my friend Raul called "the next city of Mexico after Tijuana." This large and expanding Latino enclave in east Los Angeles County is now almost the size of Philadelphia. The houses are old and cheap, available to people at the bottom of the economic ladder, yet the area seems stable. I looked for the southern California mosaic of ethnicities and nationalities that I had read about so often, but it was not here.

When I came to Los Angeles a month after the 1992 riots, I had intended to document the enormous black ghetto of South Central, the third most important concentration of African Americans after Harlem and Chicago's South Side. So I was surprised to see signs in Spanish and Latino people everywhere. I had expected South Gate, Whittier, Bell, and other towns to be white: but they, too, were overwhelmingly Latino. Here, in the heart of southern California, were churches, *mercados* (markets of all sorts), barbershops, garages, *paleteros* (mobile ice-cream vendors), and *botanicas* (magic stores)—all strongly reminiscent of Latin America. People were selling oranges, coconuts, and corn; ice-cream vendors pushed their carts and drove their *trocas* (trucks). Clearly, Spanish was taking the place of English on the streets.

Several factors contributed to the creation of this *Nuevo Mundo*. Many blacks and whites had lived in these aging bungalows while working close by in large unionized car, tire, aerospace, and steel plants. When the factories closed over the last decade and a half, many of these people moved out of the inner city to surrounding communities. In the mid-1980s, attractive houses were going up, covering the hills surrounding Los Angeles, while the prewar housing stock in the inner city was showing its age. New jobs were being created in the city, but not the skilled jobs paying union wages to which blue-collar whites and blacks were accustomed. Poor immigrants

were eager to work, even at minimum-wage jobs without benefits. And when those were not available, they were willing to bide their time by mowing lawns, painting, collecting cans, and selling oranges. The largest Latino immigration ever took place at this time. During the last five years of the 1980s, about 100,000 Mexicans a year came to the Los Angeles region, forming the greatest concentration of Spanish-speaking people in one urban area of the United States. Today, 41 percent of the County's over 9.5 million residents are Latino—they outnumber whites (36.9 percent), who rank second in population.

Today, many Latinos do piecework at home. Some start car repair and welding shops in their backyards; others gather clothes, mattresses, and furniture to sell either here or in Mexico. Some sell painted portraits on the city buses; some make furniture in their garages. Sometimes whole families pile into special pickup trucks and drive down the alleys to collect what more affluent people discard.

A rural spirit pervades Latino Los Angeles. A picture of a cow welcomes shoppers to a supermarket. A mural depicts farm folk and farm animals on equal terms, lined up behind a fence, gazing out with interest at the world of the passersby. Pigs are pictured unhappily staring out from huge cooking pots, as if aware of their destiny as taco fillings or other fare. Gigantic ears of husked corn celebrate this staple. From downtown Los Angeles to Compton, along Alameda Street, car parts are welded into the human form, inviting people to the

Maritza's Fashions, South Central Los Angeles, 1997. Maritza, the storeowner, came up with the concept for the signs; she is originally from San Salvador.

Opposite: **Lupe y Jose Ramos Barbershop, South Central Los Angeles, 1997. Lupe is originally from Guanajuato, Mexico; the idea for the sign came from her father, a barber in Mexico.**

Cover: **Pico/Union District, Los Angeles, 1996. A neighbor pointed at this photograph, saying of the top portion, "that was then," and of the bottom, "this is now." Another noted that all the signs are in Spanish.**

many automotive shops. Radiators painted to resemble torsos puff steam. Dogs, chickens, rabbits, and domestic birds abound, reminders of the rural origins of the residents. Corn often grows in the front yards, chickens run along the sidewalks, and the carcasses of dogs killed in clandestine dog fights sometimes dot the alleys.

Latino immigrants have brought new life to Los Angeles while challenging the dream of this garden city. Bungalows on narrow, deep sites are very adaptable. Although not immediately visible from the street, signs of construction are everywhere. Materials and tools are stored in backyards; small cement mixers and wheelbarrows are positioned next to bags of cement; piles of two-by-fours are stacked along walls. As resources and time become available, dwellings are rebuilt, walls are knocked down, and rooms are added. The old and the new are difficult to distinguish. Supporting this building activity are the many large lumber yards that thrive in poor areas of Los Angeles.

A backyard is often a site for an additional house; a place to fix cars; an area to raise chickens or grow vegetables; or any combination of these. Trailers frequently park there and serve as additional dwellings. Latinos are burying the former suburban greenery under cement and motor oil. Next to high-tech Los Angeles is a Latino Los Angeles of bare-bones survival. The residents' chief priorities are to make a living and to keep the family together; aesthetic considerations come last. If people can't afford a house, they live in a trailer or a car.

The Latinos of Los Angeles believe in the Virgin of Guadalupe, "the mother of all Mexicans." Images of her likeness mark the population expansion. As I told this to Mexicans in Mexico, they explained, "They need her more there." When I showed them my photographs of poor Los Angeles residents, they responded with such phrases as, "just like in Mexico," or "a little Mexico." But with the Mexican border only three hours away, there is a constant stream of visitors and an exchange of goods between Latinos on both sides of the border.

As this *Nuevo Mundo* crystallizes in the

East Los Angeles, 1985. The late Julio Avila, a retired construction worker, in front of his East Los Angeles home done in the style of Acapulco. Upon seeing this photograph, Pedro, a restaurant owner in Tijuana, remarked, "They do this so as not to feel nostalgia for their country, their town, their friends."

Opposite, top: South Central Los Angeles, 1997. Western Mufflers features a mural of Our Lady of Guadalupe flanked by classic cars, labeled "oldies."

Opposite, bottom: South Central Los Angeles, 1999. Trompe-l'oeil decorations above the Carniceria Latina are the work of a Guatemalan sign painter nicknamed "Monkey."

Los Angeles region, fences are going up along the Mexican-U.S. border just south of San Diego. Attached to them are signs portraying the territory to the north as an arid land—full of scorpions, rattlesnakes, and spiders—a land void of water and full of precipices. As I drove by the border, the radio announcer warned, "Don't cross the desert. No dream is worth dying for."

Born in Santiago, Chile, in 1944, Camilo José Vergara is a documentary photographer and writer who has photographed poor urban areas in the United States for more than two decades. His book, The New American Ghetto *(Rutgers, 1995), won the Robert E. Park Prize of the American Sociological Association in 1997; he is also author of* American Ruins, *just published by the Monacelli Press. His work has been exhibited in a number of cities; in June 1999,* Vergara's Chicago *opened at the Chicago Historical Society, and another show of his photographs,* L'America Dei Perdenti, *opened at the Triennale in Milan, Italy.*

Mr. Vergara's most recent exhibition, El Nuevo Mundo: The Landscape of Latino Los Angeles, *is on view at the Natural History Museum from January 29 to July 16, 2000; he is at work on a new book on the subject,* El Nuevo Mundo of Latino Los Angeles, *to be published by the Monacelli Press.*

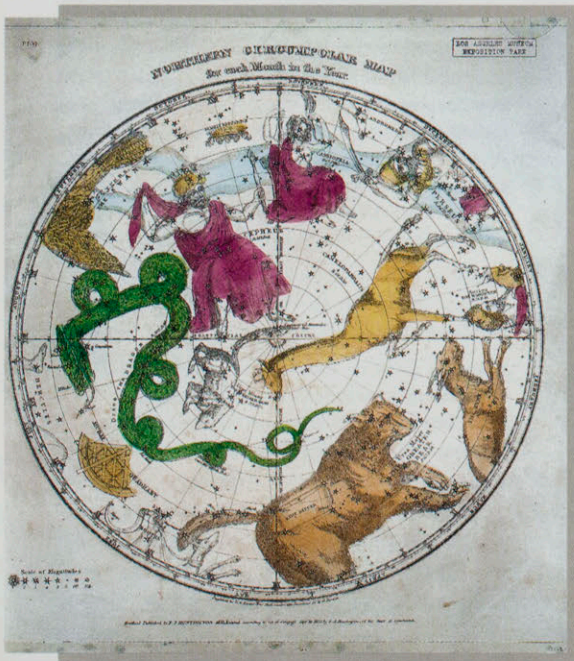
Mr. Vergara is represented by the Gallery of Contemporary Photography in Santa Monica.

The exhibition El Nuevo Mundo *was organized by the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., with Mr. Vergara as guest curator and Joseph Rosa and Chrysanthe B. Broikos as coordinating curators.*

CALIFORNIA BEARS, PAST AND PRESENT

IF ASKED TO THINK ABOUT "LARGE WILD mammals," many Angelenos would envision a scene on the African savanna: images of vast herds of wildebeests and zebras, scatterings of rhinos and elephants, as well as the lions and cheetahs that prey on them have been vividly etched into our minds through television programs and visits to the most exotic residents of the zoo. Few of us would instead conjure up a mental picture of southern California, but in fact our neighborhoods were teeming with similar large mammals a mere 20,000 years ago. The evidence of the former inhabitants comes from Rancho La Brea asphalt deposits.

At the end of the last Ice Age (just yesterday in geological time), camels, bisons, mammoths, lions, saber-toothed cats, and packs of wolves roamed the Los Angeles Basin. Had we lived here then, we also would have shared territory with the short-faced bear, *Arctodus simus,* perhaps the largest and most powerful predator in North America at the time. When fully grown, the male of this snub-nosed, long-legged carnivore was immense, as much as 2 feet taller at the shoulder than the largest grizzly or polar bear and—at



The Little Bear is near the center of this early "Northern Circumpolar Map" of the constellations, and the polestar, Polaris, is at the tip of its tail. From Elijah H. Burritt's* Atlas Designed to Illustrate the Geography of the Heavens *(Huntington and Savage, 1835), one of a number of old and rare atlases and maps in the collections of the Natural History Museum's Research Library.

BEARS IN THE SKY

The scientific name for the grizzly bear, *Ursus arctos,* is derived from two words for bear, the Latin "ursus" and the Greek "arktos." The Greek term is also at the root of "Arctic," which we've applied to the planet's north pole region because of the constellations the Great Bear and the Little Bear, whose bright stars dominate the heavens in the northern sky. Coincidentally, the Arctic is also the realm of the polar bear; in contrast, the Antarctic (the name literally means "opposite of the bear") and nearby Australia are the only continents without bears. Thus, the poles are aptly named with regard to their existing bears, but the names were applied to reflect heavenly bodies, not accurate zoology!

In her book *Grizzly Bears* (Sierra Club, 1990), Candace Savage noted that, in many cultures and traditions, "the bear stars hold the center of the whirling firmament. The polestar, the hub around which the heavens turn, is the end of the Little Bear's tail, and the Great Bear, close by, offers sighting lines by which it can be found. To this day, we use it to get our 'bearings' when we are lost."

©1985 Lynn and Donna Rogers

CAMPTOWN RAIDERS

Black bears are shy, retiring creatures that seldom interact with humans. In national parks, however, campers who are careless with their food have caused bears to become dependent on human sources of food. It's almost as if the bears have become junk-food addicts. High-calorie food has become a motive for the animals to dump ice chests and break into cars. Humans are not harmed by the scavengers unless they try to take their food back.

To protect foolish campers from possible harm, the National Park Service has developed a practice of capturing errant bears, tagging them, and translocating them to a portion of the park where natural food is abundant. If the bear returns to pester campers, it is moved again and will be moved several times before drastic action is taken. Unfortunately for the bear, if it returns several times to steal food or break into cars, or if it develops a pattern of bluff-charging humans, it will be killed. Although this killing is justified to protect campers, ironically, the campers who feed bears are actually leading the bear to its death.—*Allan Schoenherr, in* A Natural History of California, *University of California, 1992.*

Opposite, top: **A black bear has made a bed at the base of a tree that her cub can easily climb to escape danger. Photograph copyright 1988 Lynn and Donna Rogers.**

This page, top right: **A grizzly and cub in Alaska's Katmai National Park, part of the largest grizzly protection area in the world. Photograph copyright 1998 Lynn and Donna Rogers.**

Bottom, right: **Cornelius Johnson and a grizzly reputed to have been the last in the wilds of southern California. This photograph—along with an account of Mr. Johnson's shooting of the "300-pound cinnamon"—appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* for October 30, 1916, under the heading, "Taste for Grapes and Honey Fatal." Photograph Mammalogy Collections, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.**

1,500 to 1,800 pounds—at least 500 pounds heavier than the modern species.

The short-faced bear may have been more of a carnivore than its living relatives: its stubby muzzle put its strong, stabbing canine teeth in a position to bear down in a very forceful bite, and the architecture of its skull suggests that it had extremely powerful jaw-closing muscles. Its long limbs made it capable of running faster and farther than do modern bears; it may have chased down and killed its prey, which undoubtedly included some of the large herbivores found at Rancho La Brea.

The short-faced bear along with the other large mammals that ranged through our basin in the late Pleistocene met their demise around 10,000 years ago. While the reasons for these extinctions may be complex and are not yet fully understood, the expansion of populations of people may have contributed significantly to the worldwide disappearances of many Pleistocene animal species, especially the large mammals and birds. The ancient human hunters of southern California, who had only recently arrived on the West Coast, probably had no idea that their actions might forever change the landscape and vistas of wildlife in their new home.

Paleontologists working at Rancho La Brea have unearthed the remains of more than thirty individual short-faced bears—as well as fewer bones of two other bear species, the black and the grizzly. The grizzly bear, *Ursus arctos,* has been found only in the tar pits' most recent deposits, because this animal did not appear in the region until late in the last Ice Age. In writing about members of the bear family at Rancho La Brea, our Chief Curator of Paleontology John Harris noted that, at the end of the Pleistocene, "forms most closely related to types now living in California were distinctly outnumbered by bears of a kind now extinct. However, with the disappearance of the short-faced bears, the black and grizzly bears established themselves as the prevailing representatives of the family in California."

The grizzly (also known as the brown bear) and the black bear, *Ursus americanus,* thrived in our state until their interests again clashed with those of the human populations. In historic times, grizzlies were hunted to protect people and their livestock. These bears were also used in the last century in a cruel blood sport, in which a grizzly was pitted against a bull in a battle to the death. The last grizzly in the wild in southern California (reputed by some to be an escapee from a local zoological garden) was shot in 1916 just above the Los Angeles foothill community of Sunland. And the last grizzly in the entire state was killed in 1922 on a ranch outside of Fresno.

Although the grizzly bear's image still emboldens our state flag, the once widespread species—which still ranges in the far northwestern regions of North America—is now extinct in California.

California's sole remaining bear species is the black bear, whose common name is

THE BIG SLEEP

During times when food supplies are limited or temperatures are extreme, many animals can lower their metabolisms and sink into a state called "torpor," to conserve energy. The depth of the torpor depends on the size of the animal and the length of time when food is not available. In the winter months in areas where snow covers the ground, it is difficult for bears to obtain food, and most will find a den or take shelter in vegetation and then enter a mild form of torpor called winter dormancy, which is analogous to an extremely deep sleep. Black bears are dormant for five to six months, and the cubs are born during the torpor.

Although the winter denning of bears is commonly referred to as hibernation, this is not quite correct: true hibernation

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is a much more extreme condition in which the mammal's metabolism and body temperature drop significantly, often to just a few degrees above freezing. A true hibernator takes time to be aroused: a hibernating ground squirrel, for example, can easily be passed around from person to person like a curled-up stuffed toy. In contrast, as some ill-informed folks have found, startling a dormant bear in its den causes it to awaken quickly—and in a very bad mood!

something of a misnomer: although many individuals are black, others are dark brown or cinnamon, and there is even a population in the Pacific Northwest with a high percentage of white individuals. While color alone cannot always be used to distinguish between black and grizzly bears, other features are more reliable: grizzlies have longer claws and a large distinctive hump on their backs at the shoulder. In parts of the continent where the two species are found together, black bears tend to reside in dense forest or brush, while grizzlies prefer more open country.

Grizzlies and other bears, along with a number of familiar mammals (dogs, cats, skunks, and raccoons, for example) have been placed in the order Carnivora by taxonomists, to reflect the fact that they are primarily meat eaters. However, some members of the order, including most of the bears, do not live up to this billing. About 80 percent of the black bear's diet consists of vegetation and fruit, and their "meat" is most often insects, such as grubs, termites, and ants. (Among the bears, only the polar bear eats primarily meat—its habitats in the high Arctic are virtually devoid of plant matter. And another bear, the giant panda of China, feeds almost exclusively on bamboo, making it the most vegetarian of all of the Carnivora.)

The catholic diet of black bears sometimes brings them out of the woods into rural or suburban areas in search of an easy meal, typically from our garbage cans. As Allan Schoenherr describes (see "Camptown Raiders," page 7), some bears in campgrounds and national parks have acquired the junk food habit, with unhappy consequences for bears and people alike.

Because of their size and occasional agression toward humans, bears have a reputation as beasts to be feared. But in fact they typically avoid humans whenever possible, and we can further minimize the chances of an unfavorable encounter. Because some bears have poor eyesight, a quiet hiker runs the risk of startling one. Needless to say, a bear considers this poor etiquette: hikers should make noise as they traverse bear country. Curling up in a sleeping bag surrounded by rich, aromatic foods is also not advisable. And feeding bears—or any other wild animal—is always a invitation to trouble.

We know that the short-faced bear will never again amble through the Southland, and it will be years—if ever—before grizzlies come back to our state. The black bear is thus the last bear species left in our wilderness areas. As home construction and recreational activities encroach on black bear territory, people and bears will continue to interact. It is incumbent on us to ensure that these meetings are as safe as possible for both species.

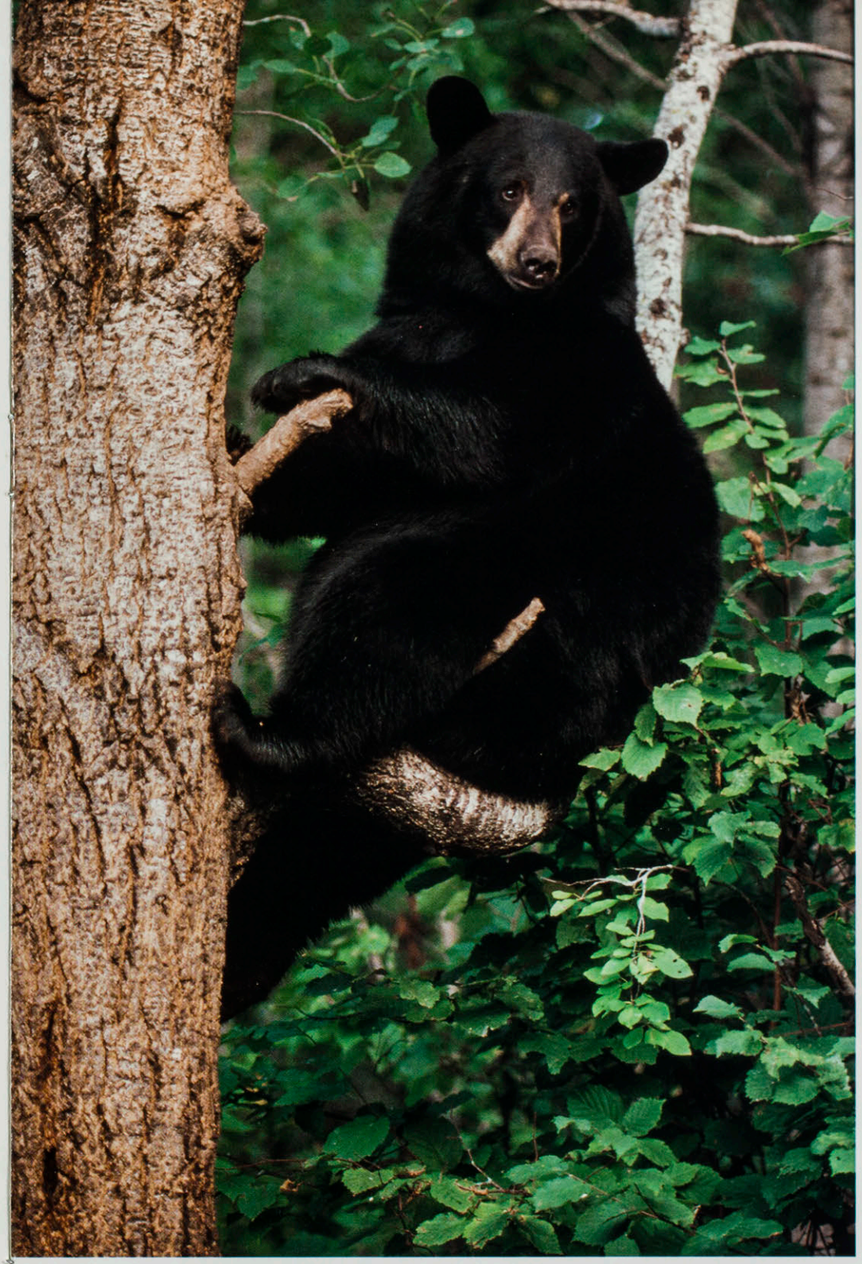
John E. Heyning
Deputy Director, Research and Collections

In addition to heading the research and collections branch of the Natural History Museum, Dr. Heyning is curator of mammals. His lifelong interest in biology began when as a small child in Torrance he captured and tried to domesticate side-blotched lizards and gopher snakes. Frequent bike rides to the tide pools of Palos Verdes introduced him to marine biology, a passion that led to his specializing in the biology of marine mammals. His research on these creatures has been featured in National Geographic, Discover, *and* New Scientist

Opposite, top: This black bear has made himself comfortable on a sturdy branch. Always the largest tree-climbers in North America, black bears have survived giant short-faced bears, American lions, and saber-toothed cats—and now avoid grizzly bears, wolves, and people—by staying near trees and keeping a timid attitude. Photograph copyright 1992 Lynn and Donna Rogers.

***Right*: From the Natural History Museum's collection, skulls of the eight living species of bears and two of their extinct relatives, *from left to right,* sloth bear, grizzly, Asiatic black bear, sun bear, giant panda, cave bear (extinct), black bear, spectacled bear, short-faced bear (extinct), and polar bear.**

Dick Meier



BEARS IMAGINATION & REALITY

This traveling exhibition, on view in the Natural History Museum through 1999, explores one of North America's most potent symbols of wilderness—the grizzly. In 1974, under the Endangered Species Act, the grizzly bear was classified as a threatened species south of the Canadian border; only 600 to 800 grizzlies survive in the western United States. The black bear, also featured in the exhibit, has fared better; some 180,000 to 200,000 individuals of this species remain, in populations found in 36 of the lower 48 states.

Bears: Imagination and Reality, compares and contrasts the bear of myth, art, literature, history, and folklore with the bear that scientists and researchers know. The exhibition includes more than two dozen mounts of grizzlies and black bears, Native American artwork and artifacts relating to bears, and a number of examples of our culture's fascination with bear images and objects, from commercial advertising to cuddly stuffed teddy bears. A highlight is a diorama recreating a black bear den with mother and nursing cubs.

presented by Ford

magazines. He lives in Hermosa Beach with his wife Corinne, two children, two cats, seven turtles, and nine species of palms.

The modern photographs of bears were provided by Dr. Lynn Rogers, formerly wildlife research biologist for the U.S. Forest Service and now a director of the North American Bear Center (www.bears.org). Dr. Rogers was a scientific advisor on the exhibition, Bears: Imagination and Reality, *providing sounds, videotape, pictures, and information for labels.*

GREED AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

GREED: MOST PEOPLE HAVE NEVER heard of the film, much less seen it. Yet Turner Classic Movies is banking on changing that by premiering a restored version of the silent classic on December 4, 1999, the seventy-fifth anniversary of its original debut. To do so, the cable television station has enlisted help from disparate sources—from *Talk* magazine to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

Why all the effort for a silent film? Because *Greed* is the Holy Grail of silent films. The story of its creation and destruction has served as a textbook example of Art versus Big Business for nearly a century. Big bad studio crushes brilliant director and ruins film: it is a story still being played out in Hollywood today.

The film is based on Frank Norris's novel *McTeague.* McTeague is a miner who leaves the California Sierras at the turn of the century for San Francisco, where he sets up a practice as a dentist, although he has no license. One of his customers is Trina, the fiancé of his friend Marcus Schouler; with Schouler's permission, McTeague courts and marries Trina himself. Schouler regrets his decision to let Trina go when she wins $5,000 in the lottery on her wedding eve. An infuriated Schouler quarrels with the bridegroom and then informs authorities of McTeague's illegal dental practice. His career destroyed, McTeague turns to drink.

Trina meanwhile becomes a miser, hoarding her lottery winnings, which she has exchanged for gold coins, and refusing to share them with her destitute spouse. McTeague finally murders her and flees with the gold coins. Schouler decides to go after McTeague, for the bounty money as well as the gold coins (which he feels should rightfully belong to him), and the two men wind up battling in Death Valley. Just as he is killed, Schouler manages to handcuff himself to McTeague. In the closing scene, McTeague—now chained to a corpse and without water or transportation—sits down to wait to die.

The creative dynamo behind the film was its director, Erich von Stroheim, who is

best known to audiences today as the balding, monocled butler to Gloria Swanson in the 1951 film *Sunset Boulevard.* Stroheim, who was born in Vienna in 1885 and immigrated to the U.S. in 1909, worked in a number of low-paying jobs before landing in Hollywood in 1914 as an extra in *The Birth of a Nation.* He continued to work for D.W. Griffith as an art director, military adviser, and assistant director. With the outbreak of World War I, Stroheim found himself frequently cast as a German "heavy" in films. Eventually he convinced Carl Laemmle of Universal Studios to allow him to direct. He produced a number of box office successes for Universal between 1918 and 1922: his films were known for their continental flair and sophistication as well as for their sexual excesses.

With each succeeding triumph, Stroheim become more difficult to control. His demand for authenticity and perfection resulted in productions that were more and more often over schedule and over budget. Finally, during the production of *Merry-Go-Round* in 1923, Universal's head of production, Irving Thalberg, fired Stroheim.

Stroheim landed on his feet a few weeks later, working for Goldwyn Pictures, with *Greed* as his first project. The director insisted that the film be made on location in the Bay Area and Death Valley, and he invited the press and others to the set to watch a master at work. As a result of the photographs and press coverage, *Greed* became a well-known film before it was ever released, just as its charismatic and controversial director had intended.

The real story, however, began after *Greed* finished shooting in October 1923. Stroheim had shot more than 446,000 feet of film, and he immediately began editing and by early 1924 had a rough cut. At this point, the sequence of events becomes a bit murky. Surviving accounts differ slightly, but all agree that Stroheim's initial cut was approximately 10 hours in length. The film was then cut to roughly 8 hours, with the plan that it be shown on two consecutive nights.

Then fate intervened when Goldwyn Pictures merged with Metro and Mayer, forming MGM. Louis B. Mayer assumed control of operations, and his assistant and the new head of production was Irving Thalberg, Stoheim's nemesis from Universal. Stroheim, anticipating problems, made a

pre-emptive move and sent the *Greed* negative to fellow director Rex Ingram for further cuts, saying that he couldn't bear to delete any more himself. Ingram's editor trimmed the film by shortening many scenes and eliminating one of several subplots concerning the greed of McTeague's neighbors and family.

As had been the case with Stroheim's two cuts of the film, the Ingram version was shown to studio executives and critics. The former continued to refuse to sign off on it for economic reasons. First of all, it was still too long—they believed that audiences would not sit through a film that lasted more than 2 hours. Furthermore by releasing a movie that was still nearly 4 hours long, the studio would be forcing theaters to have fewer showings per day, resulting in lower box office revenues. *Greed* was taken out of Stroheim's hands and shipped to Los Angeles, where editors at MGM chopped it down to 2 hours, removing all the subplots and comic relief and replacing many action sequences with poorly written title cards.

Once again, Stroheim had lost control of a film to Thalberg, and the encounters between the men were not pleasant: at one point, the two broke into fisticuffs in the latter's office. But the studio prevailed. When released in late 1924, the film was a critical and box office flop. The grim and violent plot was not viewed as entertainment suitable for women or children. There was no uplifting message.

What did survive was the legend. A number of industry insiders and members of the press viewed and reviewed the various "original" versions of the film throughout 1924, and they wrote and spoke of it as a masterpiece far superior to the massacred product released to the public. As early as 1930, *Greed* began to be included in critics' lists of the greatest films of all time, and the movie's reputation continued to grow in film schools and retrospectives.

What happened to the hours of film cut from the original negative? According to Stroheim, MGM burned the footage to retrieve the silver from the nitrate film stock, a recycling process common at the

Director Erich von Stroheim studying the script for *Greed* on location near San Francisco.

Opposite: Still cameraman Warren Lynch, movie cameramen William Daniels and Ben Reynolds, director Erich von Stroheim with megaphone, and script girl Eve Bessette filming *Greed*.

DICK MEIER

Left: **From the Natural History Museum's collections, a portrait of Jean Hersholt, who played Marcus Schouler, and the prop canteen he carried in the Death Valley scenes of *Greed*.**

Below: **Actress Zasu Pitts in costume as Trina *(at lower right)* pauses between takes. Von Stroheim and the camera crew are on the scaffold.**

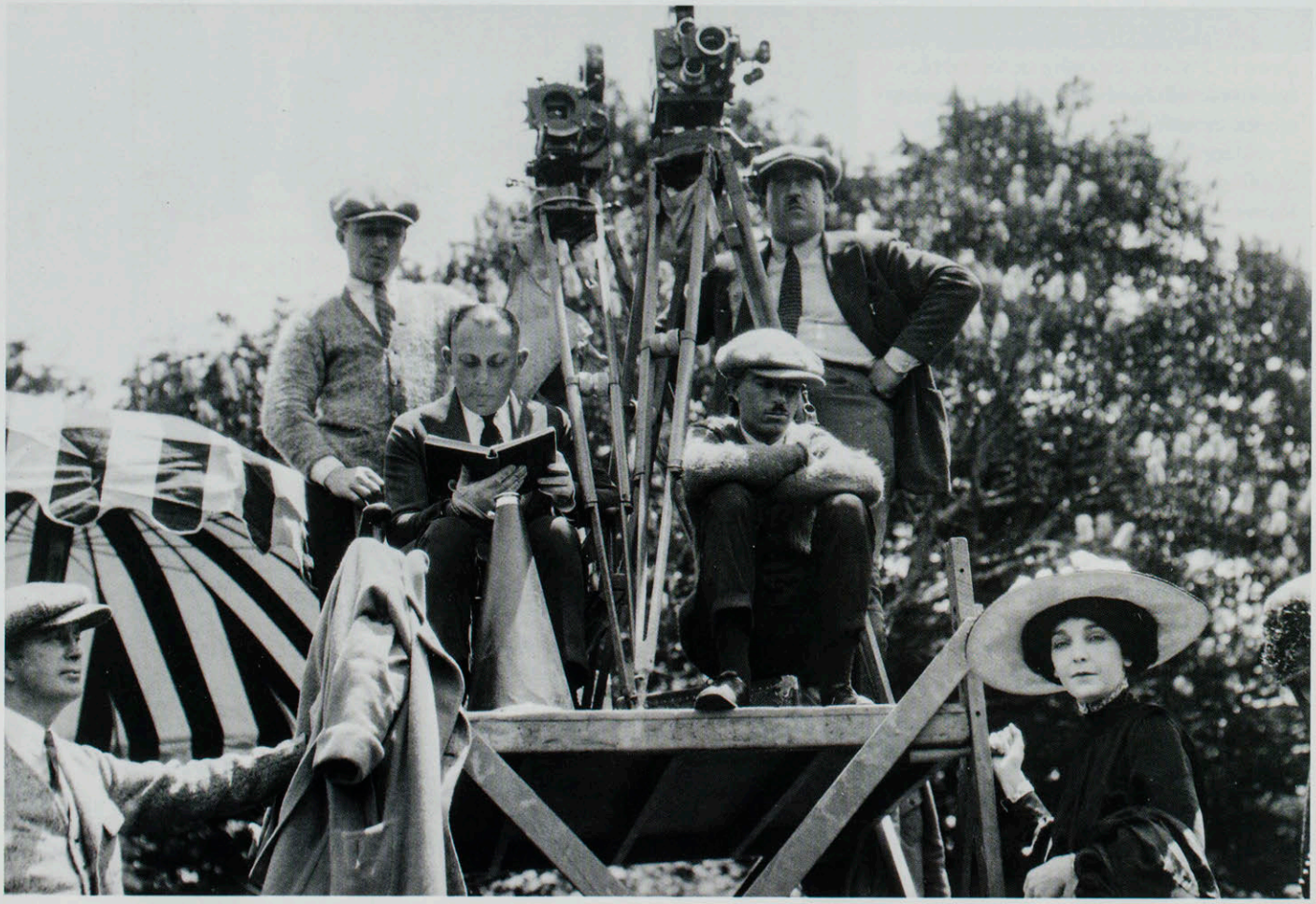
time. Because the negative was destroyed, it has been impossible to reassemble the original version, until now.

In 1998, independent producer Rick Schmidlin approached Turner, which now owns the MGM film library, with a revolutionary proposal to recreate the missing scenes of *Greed* by using still photographs.

Obsessive filmmaker that he was, Stroheim had had a still cameraman working side by side with the motion-picture cameramen, photographing each scene as it was being shot on film. Schmidlin located Stroheim's copy of the script as well as his complete set of stills. After consulting the script, the stills were placed in chronological order and then filmed with a camera panning across them and zooming in for closeups, to give the illusion of movement. The resulting version will be approximately 4 hours in length and will give viewers a glimpse of what Stroheim had originally intended.

The Natural History Museum became involved in the project because of the unique *Greed* materials housed in the Seaver Center for Western History Research and curated by the museum's history department. The most important of these resources to the reconstruction of *Greed* is the Earl Theisen Film Frame Collection.

In the 1930s, Theisen, then a museum



Two original tinted film frames from *Greed*, from the museum's collections. The gold color was applied frame by frame to scenes showing the giant gold tooth, which served as a sign for McTeague's dental parlor and as a symbol of his wealth.

curator, began collecting swatches of film that documented every experimental process or new technological advancement that had occurred since the 1890s. The collection is a rich resource for film historians studying the development of sound, color, camera movements, and widescreen processes.

Among the Theisen swatches are the only surviving color frames from *Greed's* original release. Stroheim had added imbibed color to several prints of the film that were shown in the major markets of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. A single color—gold—was applied to each frame containing an appropriate item such as coins, brass bed frames, and a canary cage. The studio viewed the color as just another Stroheim extravagance, and the public found it garish and disrupting. All of the colored prints subsequently disappeared, except for the two scenes preserved at the Natural History Museum. Schmidlin and his technical advisers used these frames in replicating the color in the newly restored *Greed.*

The other collection used by the restoration team is a group of photographs taken by one of the freelance photographers Stroheim had allowed on the *Greed* set in Oakland. In 1996, the history department purchased the twenty photographs to expand the Seaver Center's collection of silent film materials. The photographs are especially interesting because they are not posed publicity shots; they show how silent films were made, not how Hollywood wanted us to think they were made.

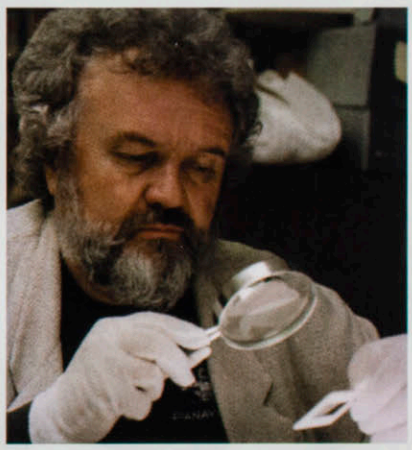
According to the *Greed* restoration team, these are the only known candid shots of Stroheim at work on the film. They show still cameraman Warren Lynch at work, and it is Lynch's stills that are being used to recreate the film. The Seaver Center has made several of these photographs available for articles on the restoration project that have already appeared in *Variety* and the *Los Angeles Times;* upcoming features in *Talk, Griffithiana,* and *Film Comment* will also make use of the stills.

Greed has always been a film primarily for cinephiles. For the most part, silent films have dropped from public view; they are not shown on television—except on Turner Movie Classics Sunday night feature—and they rarely appear in theaters. Most people think of them as primitive black and white films with simplistic plots that are overacted by performers in laughable makeup. The availability of the restored *Greed* on cable, with subsequent release in video and DVD formats, may give viewers an appreciation for the craftsmanship and complexity of filmmaking in its earliest days.

Beth Werling
Collections Manager for History

Ms. Werling, who has been with the museum since 1990, manages the history department's material culture collections. Her primary focus is on cataloging the museum's moving image materials; to train for this position, she spent much of her childhood in darkened theaters throughout the United States.

***Below, left:* Rick Schmidlin, *Greed* restoration producer, with Melanie Manos, museum curatorial assistant, and props and stills from the collections. *Right:* Cinematographer Allen Daviau examining the original film frame from *Greed* in the museum's Seaver Center. Daviau, who has been nominated for Academy Awards (*E.T., The Color Purple, Empire of the Sun,* and *Bugsy*), served as consultant on the *Greed* restoration project.**



Photographs by Dick Meier

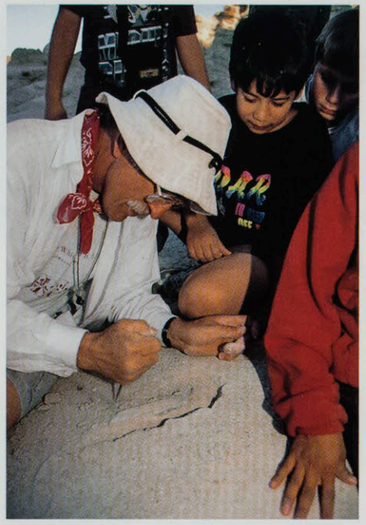
BARE BONES AND RED ROCKS

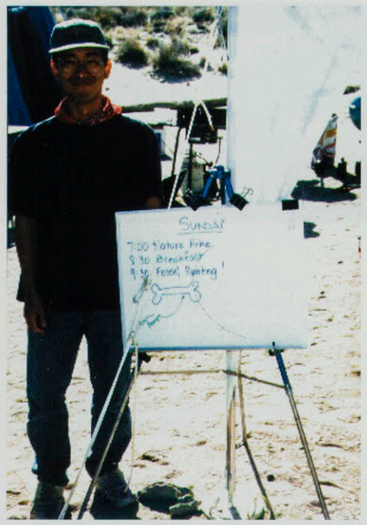
OVER THERE, THE RANGER SAYS, pointing to a narrow canyon a stone's throw from Reagan Rock. That's where O.J. Simpson acted out a plan of mass deception.

Ranger Mark Faull is telling us all about the many pretenders and deceivers who have come to Red Rock Canyon over the years—actors and directors who have turned this photogenic and sometimes otherworldly high-desert area into their own open-air sound stage.

Simpson was here for the 1978 film *Capricorn One,* in which he played one of three astronauts who fake a landing on Mars. It's easy to envision this area as Martian landscape; the rust-colored rocks that line the trails could pass for those in Pathfinder photographs.

Nearby is a stately stone pillar named for Ronald Reagan, who, perched at its peak, took a bullet from his "brother" in the 1938 film *Pals of the Saddle.* Steven Spielberg also picked the canyon for the opening scenes of his first foray into dinosaur epics. It passed for Montana then, as Laura Dern and Sam Neill played scientists prospecting for bones.





DICK MEER (LEFT), HILARY ROSS (RIGHT)

The last of these is the image that sticks with us, because they are the roles my wife, our two sons, and I have picked for ourselves. Like Laura and Sam, we are here to prospect and pretend. And though our pursuits are Miocene and not Jurassic, we, too, are playing at paleontology.

We are among about 50 scientist wanna-be's at Red Rock Canyon State Park, 25 miles north of the town of Mojave, on a camping and fossil-finding trip organized by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Our host is museum curator David Whistler, who for 36 years has been coming to Red Rock to sift its sands for clues about prehistoric creatures great and small.

Dr. Dave, as everyone here calls him, greets us at about dusk on a Friday in March as we gather near his campsite to learn our itinerary for the weekend. There will be two fossil-finding hikes Saturday and another short one Sunday morning before we pack up and head home.

After the Saturday hikes, the kids will create plaster casts of fossils, and we'll all enjoy s'mores around the campfire and indulge in the cooking of Helen Whistler, Dr. Dave's wife, who'll fortify us with hearty stews, pasta dishes, and a Sunday brunch that'll make us think we're at a five-star hotel, except for the sound of nylon tents flapping in 30-mile-an-hour winds.

This is our family's second trip to Red Rock, and we're fast learning that the weather here is less hospitable than our hosts. In early May two years ago, our late-morning hike ended in 110-degree heat. It's amazing how refreshing a canteen of warm water can be in such conditions.

Before this weekend is through, we will endure hail, snow (a highlight for the kids), and overnight temperatures in the 20s. The rangers and museum-trip regulars assure us that spring temperatures are usually in the 70s, and they point out that wind and rain help uncover fossils, making them easier to find.

But we need little assuagement. We're here in the name of science, and if that means mornings and nights of ski parkas and stocking hats, so be it. We are warmed by the spirit of discovery—as well as several cups of steaming hot cocoa.

Saturday morning begins with a talk from Dr. Dave. He tells us what to look for (off-white and gray pieces of bone and teeth) and what to look out for (rattlesnakes and scorpions).

He says trip participants have never had a run-in with a dangerous critter, but it's best to be wary. On the other hand, these trips have yielded scores of fossils, a few of which are displayed on a picnic table that's quickly surrounded by curious kids. There's the jawbone of an ancient fox-like creature, and a long thigh bone from a prehistoric camel. In 1997, museum paleontologists searching in the Dove Spring Formation near Red Rock Canyon discovered a fossilized tusk of a mastodon-like elephant that stood about 9 feet tall. It was conclusive evidence that shovel-tusk gomphotheres trudged through this area when it was lush and green, about 9.5 million years ago.

That news makes us eager to hit the trail, armed with ice picks, toilet paper, and egg cartons—to unearth and protect our finds.

For the next two days, Dr. Dave and his assistants, Kamaron Sardar and Gary Takeuchi, will have kids as constant companions. The three are pied pipers of paleontology—wherever they go, a line of children snakes behind. Our 4-year-old, who balks at walking the three blocks to his brother's school in the morning, hikes for miles here without complaint.

Opposite, left: **Dr. Dave Whistler, surrounded by admirers, works to extract a fossil.** ***Right,*** **Gary Takeuchi, museum educator and paleontology technician.**

NANCY FOX

To the adults, Dr. Dave is more like the professor on *Gilligan's Island.* We pepper him with questions on everything from botany to backpack repair, and he usually has the answer. And even after the 10,000th time he has to say "No, that's rock" as tiny shards are held up to his view, his patience never wavers.

Dr. Dave's scientific experience with Red Rock Canyon dates to before it became a state park in 1968. His paleontological specialty is small mammals—rodents, shrews, etc.—but significant finds of all sizes are logged in one of the beige bound volumes he carries on all fossil-finding treks. Each book has thousands of entries, and he's up to book 11, which shows the importance of the site and its hold on Dr. Dave.

By the midpoint of our second hike, almost all of us have found at least a few bone fragments, but nothing has made it into the book. We've seen a scorpion, a coachwhip snake, and an endangered desert tortoise, and a few of us are just enjoying the warmth of the afternoon sun.

Then, at a nearby ridge, a camper calls out. She holds up a long bone that may have come from an ancient rhinoceros, or maybe a camel, or even a gomphothere. A bunch of us clamber up to take a closer look.

Dr. Dave takes out his book.

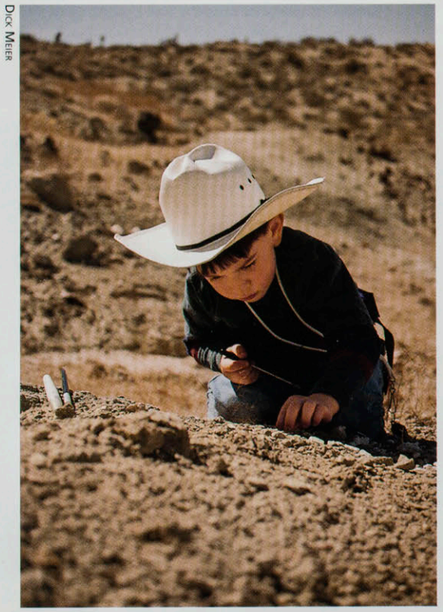
It's the moment we've all been searching the sand for. Though only one of us actually made the find, the rest of us wantonly bask in the glory, exchanging smiles and handshakes. We, as a team, have crossed the threshold from pretenders to full-fledged fossil finders.

Might as well pass out the Ph.D.s, because on this hill is a whole passel of paleontologists.

DENNIS ARP

Mr. Arp is a freelance writer who lives in Brea with his wife, two children, and four tortoises; all but the tortoises have been museum members since 1995. As principal at CE Specialized Communications, Mr. Arp works on a variety of projects, from corporate publications to adventure travel articles to personal biographies and family histories. For 12 years, he wrote and edited for the Orange County Register, *and he has also written for the* Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, *and* Portland Oregonian. *His writing portfolio recently won an Award of Excellence in a six-state competition of the International Association of Business Communicators.*

Twice a year, Dr. Dave Whistler leads weekend camping trips to Red Rock Canyon; the next fossil hunt there is scheduled for spring 2000. For more information on these and other Natural History Museum field trips and family programs, please consult your Naturalist *calendar of events or call 213.763.3534.*



DICK MEIER

THE GLADYS MANKINS BEAR DANCE POSTERS

IN THE EARLY 1960S, the Native American people of the Susanville Rancheria in Lassen County, California, began to come together annually as a community to welcome spring with a bear dance. After dancing with the bear, the people went to the water to cleanse themselves and pray and to throw the wormwood branches they had carried during the dance into the water. At this point, the slate of the previous year—including any quarrels one may have had with enemies—was wiped clean. People of all tribes, as well as non-Indians, were welcomed at the gathering, and a feast was held.

In 1981, artist Jean LaMarr began a series of posters to support the bear dances and to commemorate their sponsor, Gladys Mankins, and her brother Harley Servilican. The poster shown here, printed in 1982, was created to mark the twentieth annual bear dance at Susanville Rancheria. Bear and Rattlesnake are traditionally paired in the bear dance because they both emerge from hibernation in the spring; in this serigraph, the diamond pattern represents Rattlesnake.

Jean LaMarr was born in Susanville in 1945. She studied at the Philco-Ford Technical Institute in Santa Clara and later at San Jose City College and the University of California at Berkeley, where she pursued her interest in art and Native American studies. Her prints and paintings have been widely exhibited in California and included in numerous national and international shows. She was invited to participate in *Intergraphik '84* in East Berlin and Frankfurt, Germany, in a collaborative Maori and Native American exhibition in Auckland, New Zealand, and in *Memory Walking,* a 1999 show in Wellington, New Zealand, featuring women artists of the Pacific Rim.

Ms. LaMarr combines a career as a studio artist with commitments as an educator and Native American community member; she has taught at several northern California schools including the College of Marin in Kentfield, San Francisco State University, and the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. In 1985 she was an artist-in-residence at the Susanville Rancheria, where she developed workshops combining history and studio arts for the community's young people.

The Natural History Museum acquired six of the seven posters in Ms. LaMarr's bear dance series with funds from a Hearst Foundation endowment in support of the museum's ongoing commitment to twentieth- and twenty-first-century Native American art. The posters are a particularly appropriate addition to the collections; although they are contemporary, they were created in service of enduring community values and traditions.

MARGARET ANN HARDIN
Curator of Anthropology

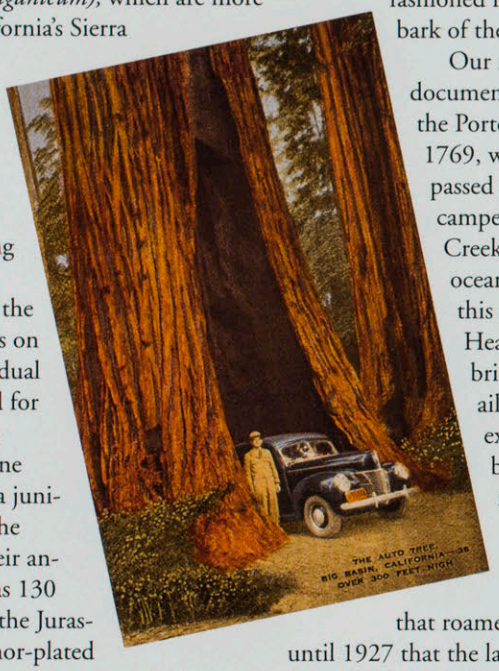
Dr. Hardin's interest in Native American arts dates to her fourth year, when she encountered an Acoma water jar in a small university museum. She went on to earn a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Chicago. In 1986, she learned of Jean LaMarr's community-oriented artwork at a lecture by the artist, and she subsequently attended a bear dance.

The Natural History Museum's Gladys Mankins Posters will be on display in one of the Exposition Park museum's ground floor galleries through the end of 1999 and then will be installed in the Contemporary Art Gallery of the Times Mirror Hall of Native American Cultures.

The museum thanks Jean LaMarr for her help and guidance with the text for the exhibition of the Gladys Mankins Bear Dance Posters.

Annual Bear Dance **by Jean LaMarr, 1982. Serigraph, 17 by 23½ inches. FP.4.86-28**

BIG TREES! That's what vacationers saw in northern California at the turn of the century—enormous red trees. The scientific name is *Sequoia sempervirens,* but we call these particular giants coast redwoods to distinguish them from the other "big trees," the giant sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum),* which are more numerous in California's Sierra Nevada mountains. Although the giant sequoias are often more massive, the coast redwoods are the world's tallest living trees, and the two species are among the oldest living things on earth: some individual trees have survived for thousands of years (only the bristlecone pine and the Sierra juniper live longer). The redwoods trace their ancestry back as far as 130 million years—to the Jurassic Period: the armor-plated stegosaur and the dagger-toothed allosaur lumbered through ancient forests of giant tree ferns and redwoods and other conifers.



Today, redwood forests can be seen along the coasts of northern California and up into southern Oregon. Just 20 miles north of the city of Santa Cruz lies Big Basin Redwoods State Park, established in 1902 and California's oldest state park. Consisting of 18,000 acres of old growth and recovering redwood forests of mixed conifers, oaks, chaparral, and riparian habitat, Big Basin is the home of the largest continuous stand of ancient coast redwoods south of San Francisco.

Little is known about early human activity in the Big Basin region. It is presumed that the Native Americans there did not dwell deep in the red forests but preferred more open country where food and other commodities were more plentiful. They did, however, use the timber from the fallen giants and the driftwood, which littered the river valleys and beaches of northern California for hundreds of miles. The plentiful wood was used to build homes and canoes; domestic utensils and weapons, as well as clothing, were also fashioned from the timber and bark of the redwood.

Our more recent history documents the adventures of the Portola expedition in 1769, when the explorers passed along the coast and camped in the Waddell Creek watershed near the ocean shore. They called this area La Salud (The Health) because after a brief rest here several ailing members of the expedition began to feel better. The California mission padres later named the same area Arroyo de los Osos for the wild grizzlies that roamed the valley. It wasn't until 1927 that the land was officially designated Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

With the exception of the park at Big Basin and several privately held reserves, logging of the entire 500-mile-long redwood region continued unchecked well into the twentieth century. In 1901, photographer Andrew P. Hill and eight other members of the Sempervirens Club found sponsors for a bill in the state legislature that ultimately led to the acquisition of the Big Basin as a park. Further support for the redwood forests was garnered by men such as Henry Fairfield, John C. Merriam, and Madison Grant; they formed the "Save-the-Redwoods League," an organization responsible for the 1918 purchase of more than 100,000 acres of *Sequoia sempervirens.* This land now forms the nucleus of California's extensive system of redwoods state parks.

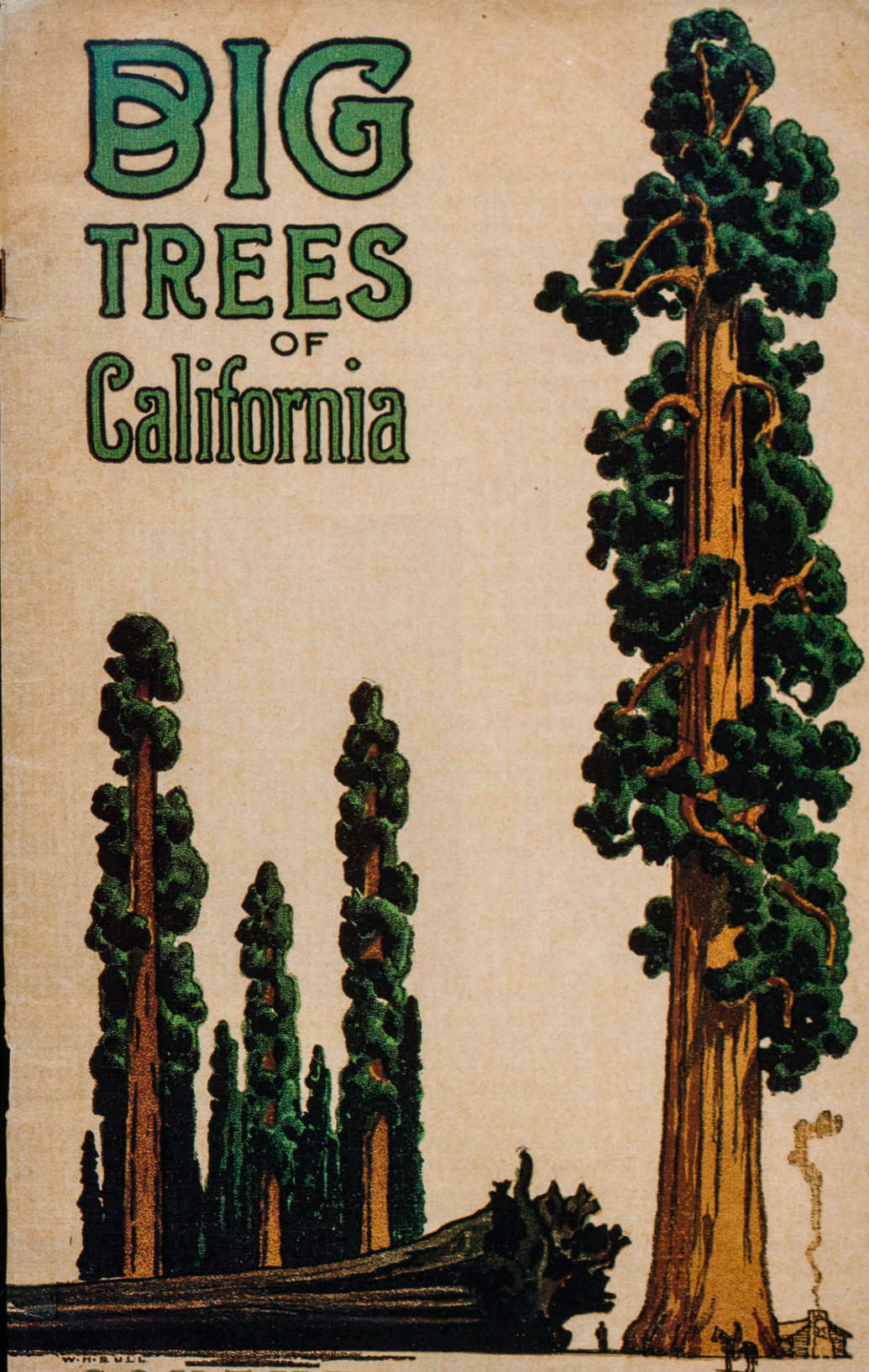
The coast redwoods serve to link our civilization with those of the past, but these primeval giants also connect us to the world as it possibly will be 130 million years into the future, with redwoods continuing to flourish as—in the words of Theodore Roosevelt—"living monuments of beauty."

JACQUELINE MORIN
Collections Manager in History,
Seaver Center

"Focus on the West" is a TERRA feature that presents pictorial highlights of the museum's Seaver Center for Western History Research. The Seaver Center is rich in photographs and other materials relating to the history of California and the American West; included are extensive collections of postcards and tourism brochures from which the images shown here were selected.

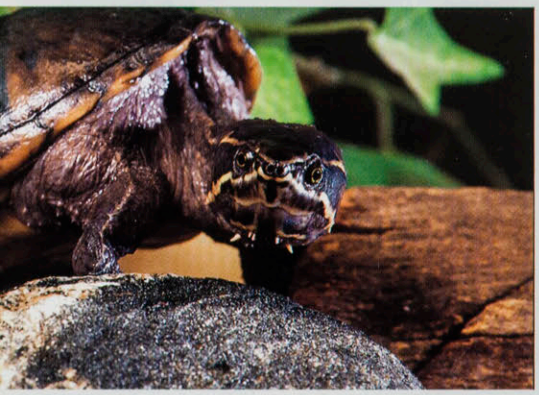
Jacqueline Morin received her M.L.I.S. degree, with an emphasis on archives and special collections, from San Jose State University in 1998. Though originally from Massachusetts, she has lived in California since 1972, mainly on Los Angeles's "West Side." She has no pets but does try to baby a few houseplants on the balcony, including three redwood saplings.

BIG TREES OF California



SOUTHERN PACIFIC

THE LIVING COLLECTION



In the Discovery Center of the Natural History Museum, in the early morning hours before the museum opens, Leslie Gordon and her assistant Eric Berrios, attend to some sixty permanent resident animals, called the Living Collection. Today, Leslie is rubbing baby oil on the crest spines of Cecil, the large Green Iguana that lives in an 8-foot-tall terrarium just at the center's entrance. In her regular molts, Cecil is having trouble shedding the skin on the crest projections; as she grows, the old skin will begin to bind if it isn't loosened and removed.

Eric is feeding crickets to the four Western Toads. The crickets are live (just like the insects these amphibians capture in the wild), but simply dropping them into the terrarium doesn't ensure that each toad will get his fair share. Instead, using long tweezers, Eric dangles a cricket in front of a toad's mouth, moving it back and forth slowly until the animal recognizes it as a food item and strikes; the process is repeated until each of the toads has had the daily allotment of insects.

The Ralph M. Parsons Discovery Center's Living Collection includes many reptiles and amphibians, tanks of saltwater and freshwater fishes, and one mammal (Jasper, the rabbit). The animals enhance the rich learning environment of the center, offering visitors opportunities to see and sometimes touch exotic animals from around the world. The terrariums and aquariums are a focal point for informal discussions about animal adaptation and behavior as well as certain conservation and preservation issues. And they also offer lessons on the rigors of caring for an unusual pet.

Leslie and Eric recently completed "Introduction to Zoo Operations," a Los Angeles Zoo course for keepers of exotic animals, and are experts on the special needs of captive reptiles and amphibians. Iguanas, for example, are about 8 inches long when young and are vivid green and rather wonderful looking, resembling small dinosaurs. But in captivity and away from the typical iguana habitats of tropical Latin America, a lizard like Cecil requires a great deal of personal attention. Her diet must be carefully monitored to be sure that the "salad" she eats contains not just lettuce but a variety of greens and fruits containing a full complement of essential vitamins and minerals. To digest properly, she needs the warmth of full spectrum lighting, most easily provided by allowing her to bask for an hour or so each day in the sun on the roof of the museum. And now that she is more than 4 feet long, Cecil has dramatic means of expressing any displeasure with her handling—her tail, which is thick at the base and about two-thirds of her total body length, packs a wallop!

Cecil and most of the other animals in the Discovery Center were donated to the museum because their owners could no longer take care of them at home. Dr. Frank Lavak and his staff at the Wilshire Animal Hospital provide the specialized veterinary care needed when, for example, Schneider, the lovely yellow and orange Schneider's Skink, begins for some reason to excrete a portion of its bowel or one of the elegant little Anole Lizards goes off its feed. This care and the daily attention of Leslie and Eric ensure that the Living Collection continues to provide unique experiences for the thousands of people who visit the Discovery Center each year.

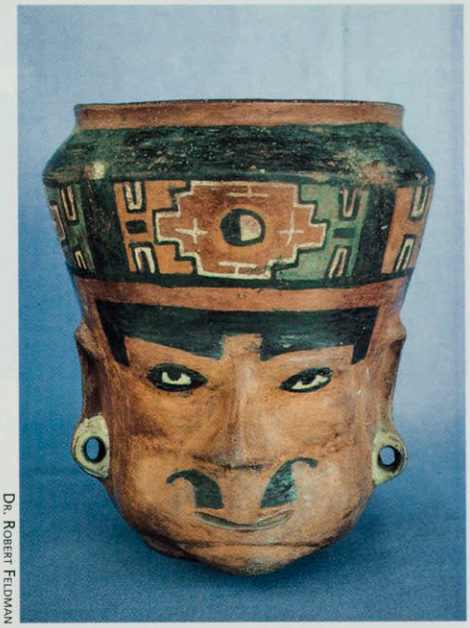
Celena Turney, visitor education coordinator, reports that Eric Berrios is returning to school this fall and is now working on weekends in the Discovery Center as a gallery interpreter; Emma Torres is the new assistant animal care technician. As outstanding students in the Los Angeles Zoo's introductory course on exotic animal care, Ms. Torres and Ms. Gordon qualified for advanced instruction and began attending the Zookeeper Training Academy in late August.

Cecil, the Living Collection's Green Iguana.

***Top,* Stinkpot, the Common Musk Turtle; *bottom,* Face, one of the Western Toads. Photographs by Dick Meier.**

MUSEUM ON THE MOVE

STUDY OF ANCIENT PERUVIANS



DR. ROBERT FELDMAN

The man depicted on this Tiwanaku vessel, found near the city of Moquegua in the south of Peru, has a challenging gaze and a fine moustache; his features and the geometric designs on his headdress are still vividly colored, although the pot is at least 1,000 years old.

For the past 10 years, Karen Wise, associate curator of anthropology for the Natural History Museum, and her colleagues have been meeting annually in Moquegua to conduct archaeological research on the Tiwanaku and other pre-Columbian inhabitants of the south-central Andean area. The region's history was very poorly known before the team's work began, but through excavation, survey, and analysis, the archaeologists have been able to define the ancient civilizations of the region, including the Inca and pre-Inca cultures such as the Tiwanaku and the Wari and their predecessors. In field work, the group unearthed a number of important artifacts relating to daily life at sites dating back up to 10,000 years; so many objects have been recovered that an entire museum, the Museo Contisuyo, was built to house them and the few finds—such as the Tiwanaku pot—from earlier studies.

Some of the results of the recent study have now been published in *Moquegua: Los primeros doce mil años* (Moquegua: The first twelve thousand years) by the Museo Contisuyo. Edited by Dr. Wise, the book is the first general resource on the area and one of the first publications in Spanish to deal with research in Moquegua; it has been adopted as a textbook for secondary school children by the Moquegua school district.

NEW EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT

James L. Powell has announced the appointment of Ann Muscat as executive vice-president for strategic initiatives for the Natural History Museum.

Dr. Muscat, who received her Ph.D. in biological sciences from the University of Southern California in 1983, has had a distinguished career. Her research focuses on the population biology and community ecology of echinoderms of the subtidal, intertidal, and deep ocean zones. In the 1980s, she participated in two research trips to the Antarctic, where she and microbiologist colleagues studied the dynamics of the communities of microbes living just under the sea ice and on the ocean bottom. She also was taxonomist for a project jointly sponsored by USC and the Bureau of Land Management to survey the bottom organisms of the marine waters off southern California, and she served as assistant director and then director of the USC Wrigley Marine Science Center on Catalina Island, where she established a marine ecological reserve.

In 1988, Dr. Muscat joined the staff of Exposition Park's California Museum of Science and Industry as science curator. Later, as deputy director and senior vice president for programs there, she was in charge of exhibit and architectural planning for the museum's transformation into the new California Science Center, which opened in early 1998. She followed that effort with the planning of a new elementary school and science education resource center, which will open in the Science Center's Armory and a new adjacent building in 2004.

In announcing the appointment, Dr. Powell noted that the Natural History Museum was fortunate to find someone with a strong background in research, education, and administration. "This is an important and dynamic new position," he said. "We want Dr. Muscat to take a fresh look at our 86-year-old cultural institution and to develop new ways to present our priceless collections and exhibits to the community."

RECORD GRANT FOR CRUSTACEA LABORATORY

Dr. Jody Martin, curator of crustacea, has received a grant of $750,000 from the National Science Foundation to fund his research and training program for the next 5 years. The grant is the largest award that NSF has ever made to the museum for a research project.

The new grant, from the Systematic Biology Program's Partnership for Enhancing Expertise in Taxonomy (PEET), will provide money for research, laboratory equipment and materials, and travel; the tuition and stipends of three of Dr. Martin's Ph.D. students from UCLA are also covered. Some of the funds will be used for molecular genetic analyses in the UCLA laboratory of Dr. Dave Jacobs, who will be overseeing the students' on-campus course and experimental work; Dr. Martin will supervise their work on research monographs and their systematic training in crustaceans at the museum.

Competition for these awards is intense; they are available only every other year, and only eight were awarded in 1999. The grant focuses national attention on the museum's research and training activities.

The award is the fourteenth from NSF that Dr. Martin has received during his career. Earlier this year, he and student-in-residence Todd Zimmerman were awarded $183,000 from NSF for a 3-year biotic survey of the marine invertebrates of an island in the Caribbean. But the PEET grant is especially meaningful to Dr. Martin: "Basically, the award is a confirmation by NSF and other scientists across the country that we're doing the right things here at the museum. There are far too few taxonomists and systematists in the sciences today, expecially those who study marine invertebrates. NSF has recognized this by providing these grants to allow us to train the next generation of biologists to continue what we are doing."

NEW LECTURE SERIES ON DISCOVERY

The museum's Research and Collections Branch and Education Division are pleased to announce a new joint venture, "World Discoveries by Curators," a series of monthly lectures presented by museum curators. The Saturday afternoon talks in the World Discovery Series will cover the full range of our curatorial expertise; the schedule for 2000 includes presentations on mammals, fossils, fishes, mineral sciences, insects, and history.

The premiere lecture, on Saturday, February 12, at 2 p.m., will be "Warm Hearts and Cold Tongues: Thermoregulation in Whales," by Dr. John E. Heyning, deputy director for research and collections and curator of mammals.

The lectures will be free of charge to museum members and staff. Please consult your copy of the *Naturalist* for information about this and future presentations.

DICK MEIER

John Heyning with the Whalemobile, a specially designed truck used to haul cetaceans that have died after beaching to the museum where their tissues can be sampled and their bones and organs preserved in the collections. The 27-foot-long vehicle was donated to the Natural History Museum in 1988 by Ford Motor Company, which is now sponsoring the exhibition *Bears: Legend and Reality.*

A Wonderful World is Yours to Give

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, you can surprise someone special with a membership at the Natural History Museum.

Among the many benefits that your gift includes are unlimited free admission to four great museums; subscriptions to Terra and the Naturalist, the museum's publications; invitations to members-only events; discounts on museum educational programs; and exciting travel opportunities.

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Or call 213.763.3426 for further information

DONATION OF RARE AMBER

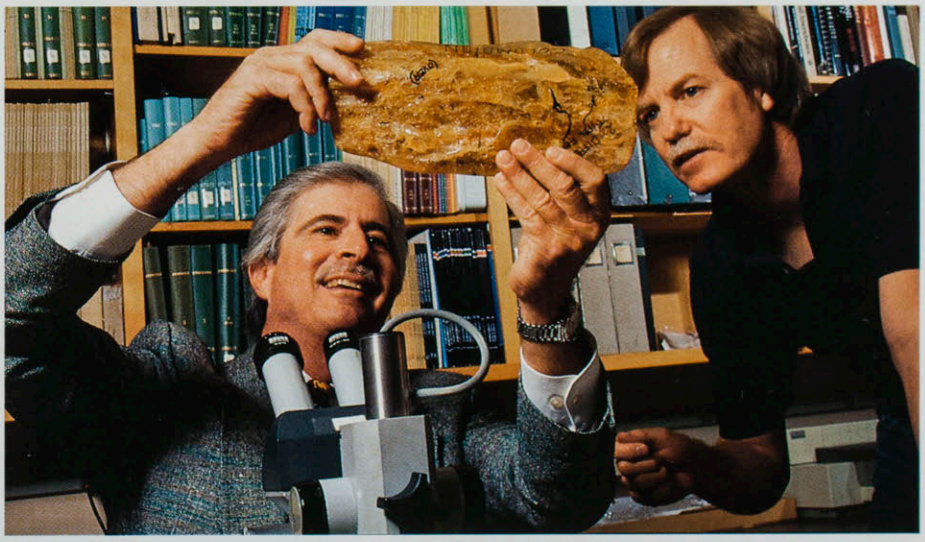
Santa Monica businessman Michael Oschin has given the Natural History Museum a large collection of amber that includes pieces from Lebanon and New Jersey as well as the Baltic region and the Dominican Republic. Many of the semiprecious gems contain remnants of ancient environments—organisms that became entrapped between 25 and 40 million years ago, when the flow of sticky tree resin began the process of their fossilization. Leaves, seeds, pollen, and flowers and a variety of insects and other invertebrate animals are encapsulated and preserved in their original three-dimensional form, with extremely delicate parts such as antennae and frond tips still intact.

Amber has tremendous popular appeal, and rare fossils encased in amber bring high prices on the market—and in some cases are then lost for study by scientists. The donation has particular importance to the museum, where teams of researchers can contribute to the identification of the included organic material. Future studies of the collection may provide new insight into how species evolved and became extinct in the past and how they coexisted and interacted in life.

When found, pieces of amber are almost always covered with a thick brownish or grayish crust. Removing the crust, which is primarily done by hand, is an exacting process requiring great patience: scratches left on the outer surface can obscure the contents of the amber, and it is easy to abrade away parts of the encapsulated organisms or to have the piece shatter altogether with a slip of a rasp or file. Mr. Oschin has prepared many of the pieces in the collection himself, and their pristine condition attests to his skill and care. The donation included an array of specimens that can be used in a future exhibition to show the physical stages of processing pieces of amber to the final polished state—where flies, spiders, bees, and other inclusions are visible—as well as the color variation of the gemstone, from the milky white "mutton fat" to an array of dark and golden honey shades.

The possibility that scientists may someday be capable of extracting viable DNA from the trapped organisms adds an exciting dimension to museum collections of amber. As it is, the pieces in the Oschin donation offer a fascinating glimpse into the world as it was eons ago when the amber was being formed.

JANUSZ KUPRY JANOWICZ



DICK MEIER

Below: **Michael Oschin *(left)* with Collections Manager Lindsey Groves in one of the museum's laboratories. *Above:* a mosquito fossilized in amber.**

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The Natural History Museum exists to advance knowledge and to enable people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests to understand and appreciate their natural and cultural heritage. The museum assembles, conserves, interprets, and holds in trust collections of irreplaceable objects from nature and human history. These collections reveal the history of the Earth and the evolution and diversity of life and culture. They sustain programs of research, exhibits, education, and publication.

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OSO WANTS TO TRAVEL!

Oso, the perfect gift for collectors. Item 28160, $13.95

OSO, the museum's toy bear, wants to find children who will take him everywhere. And while he sees the world, he may be able to help you win a $100 gift certificate in the Natural History Museum's Stores. The museum's Oso contest begins on November 13, when we celebrate Teddy Bear Funday in the Exposition Park museum. The first 100 children ages 5 to 12 to visit and sign up in the Explore Store on that day will receive one of the special Oso collector teddy bears free, along with a travel diary and a chance to win another prize—the gift certificate. Come to the Explore Store early to be among the 100 children to receive Oso and his travel diary. Then, from November 13 until January 2, write down in the travel diary all the places that your Oso goes and keep track of how many miles he travels. The Oso that has traveled the most when the contest ends on January 2 wins the certificate, good for merchandise in any of the five Natural History Museum stores.

OSO CAN TRAVEL WITH YOU or with your family and friends. He can go on a bus, in the car, or on a boat; he can even fly away on an airplane to another city. Just keep track of his mileage and have an adult sign your diary at the end of the contest. To qualify to win the gift certificate, your diary must be returned to the Explore Store on or before January 2, 2000 (your diary must be returned but your Oso bear gets to stay with you forever!).

A MUSEUM SHOPS
GIFT CERTIFICATE

opens the door to five unique stores filled with an eclectic array of merchandise. Redeemable at the Natural History Museum's three stores or at the Page Museum and Petersen Museum stores, this is a gift certificate sure to please even the most demanding of tastes. For information call the museum stores at 213.763.3488

The Oso contest is open to everyone except dependents of Natural History Museum employees; research, field, and museum associates; volunteers; interns; or contractors and vendors. No more than two children per family may receive free Oso bears. Member's discounts may not be applied when using the gift certificate.

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